Cultural knowledge



Here are some of the ways you can celebrate Chinese New Year:

* Clean House - Before the New Year arrives, the Chinese consider it very important to give the house a thorough cleanning, sweeping away any bad luck that may have accumulated over the past year.
* Decorate! - Doors and window panes are also often painted red, considered to be a lucky color. In addition, people like to hang papercuts on doors and windows. (Paper cutting is an ancient Chinese art form dating back to the Han dynasty).
* Don't clean for the first few days of the New Year - if you do any sweeping during this time, you risk sweeping away your good luck.



* Offer a Sacrifice to the Kitchen God - Many families have a poster of the [Kitchen God](http://chinesefood.about.com/library/blphotokitchengod.htm) in their kitchen. The custom is to offer a ceremonial sacrifice to the Kitchen God, to make sure that he gives a good report on the family's behavior when he returns to heaven. [Sticky Cake (Nian Gao)](http://chinesefood.about.com/od/chinesenewyear/r/niangao.htm) is popular, or children may rub honey on him.



* An important tradition on New Year's Eve is for families to gather together and spend the evening preparing [Chinese dumplings (Jiaozi)](http://chinesefood.about.com/od/dimsumdumplings/r/jiaozi.htm). According to Chinese Culture Guide Jun Shan, it is common to hide a coin in one of the dumplings. Whoever gets the dumpling with the coin will supposedly have good luck in the coming year.
* Give out money packets - On New Years day, children receive [leisee](http://chinesefood.about.com/library/blphotoluckymoney.htm) - red packets decorated with gold symbols and filled with "lucky money".

* Serve festive foods - Throughout the New Years season, certain foods are served because they symbolize abundance and good fortune. Besides preparing special dishes, tangerines and oranges are often passed out to children and guests, as they symbolize wealth and good luck.

* Prepare a [Tray of Togetherness](http://chinesefood.about.com/library/blphototrayoftogetherness.htm) - This is a circular or octagon-shaped tray with eight compartments, each containing symbolic foods such as lotus seeds and lychee nuts, that provides a sweet beginning to the New Year.